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From: Ham-Policy Mailing List and Newsgroup <ham-policy@ucsd.edu>  
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Reply-To: Ham-Policy@UCSD.Edu  
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Today's Topics:  
    Code test speeds

Send Replies or notes for publication to: <Ham-Policy@UCSD.Edu>  
Send subscription requests to: <Ham-Policy-REQUEST@UCSD.Edu>  
Problems you can't solve otherwise to brian@ucsd.edu.

Archives of past issues of the Ham-Policy Digest are available  
(by FTP only) from UCSD.Edu in directory "mailarchives/ham-policy".

We trust that readers are intelligent enough to realize that all text  
herein consists of personal comments and does not represent the official  
policies or positions of any party. Your mileage may vary. So there.

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Date: Thu, 19 May 1994 03:05:37 GMT  
From: brunix!pstc3.pstc.brown.edu!md@uunet.uu.net  
Subject: Code test speeds  
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

gary@ke4zv.atl.ga.us (Gary Coffman) writes:

> You said a mouthful there Neil. Incentive Licensing has been the most  
> damaging thing to happen to amateur radio since WWII shut it down  
> completely. A. Prose Walker and the old guard at the ARRL won that  
> battle, but the cost was incredibly high. Growth slowed from a near  
> geometric increase in the 1950s and 1960s to barely replacement level.  
> As a percentage of the US population, amateur radio actually shrank.

Do you have any studies which statistically regress out other factors  
which may have contributed to a decrease in amateur operators, such as  
the advent of the television generation?

> Most of the US amateur manufacturers and dealers folded.

Do you have any evidence to support the contention that incentive  
licensing somehow resulted in this effect, even though every other

industry which involved electronics, like tv's, stereos, etc., suffered the same fate?

> It was an  
> unmitigated disaster that left a bad taste in the mouths of many  
> amateurs and potential amateurs.

The same could be said of the codeless license in place today.

> Recently, several whiners have complained that the tests are too easy.  
> Its important to realize that the licensing exam is an \*entrance\* exam  
> to a lifelong process of learning, not a graduation certificate.

If that's the case, then shouldn't we have several levels of license, with additional benefits, for those people who demonstrate that they are capable of contributing to ham radio? Shouldn't the entry-level license be relatively easy, and subsequent exams harder?

> We should work to fix that by beefing up the VEC  
> question pools.

Evidence shows that the power base of the hobby is more interested in quantity than quality.

> But manual Morse speed exhibitions have nothing to do with  
> the basis and purpose of amateur radio at the end of the 20th century.  
> The military no longer requires it, so it doesn't provide the nation with a  
> trained cadre of skilled practitioners in case of national emergency as it did  
> in WWI and WWII. It's merely an archaic holdover from those times. Like  
> learning to shoe horses in the late 20th century, it's a skill that some  
> may choose to take up for their own \*entertainment\*, but it's not something  
> that everyone wishing to experiment with radio communications needs to  
> know.

The theory exams only test how well you memorize. The code test is a test of how you "operate", in the sense that you are demonstrating your ability to operate in at least one mode. So, we have the theory, and we have practice. What do you propose to replace the practice with? How to turn on your 2 meter FM radio and key up with "Break break, anyone out there, come back?"

MD

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-- Michael P. Deignan  
-- Amalgamated Baby Seal Poachers Union, Local 101  
-- "Get 'The Club'... Endorsed by Baby Seal poachers everywhere..."

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End of Ham-Policy Digest V94 #214

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